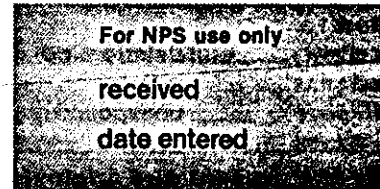


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



## 1. Name

historic Dickenson County Courthouse (Preferred)

and/or common Same

## 2. Location

street & number Main and McClure Streets (T1001 and VA 607) N/A not for publication

city, town Clintwood N/A vicinity of ~~Congressional District~~

state Virginia code 51 county Dickenson code 051

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name Dickenson County, C/o Chairman  
Board of Supervisors

street & number Dickenson County Courthouse

city, town Clintwood N/A vicinity of state Virginia 24228

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dickenson County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town Clintwood state Virginia 24228

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys (2) (See Continuation Sheet #2)

(1) Historic American Buildings  
title Survey Inventory has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1958 ☒ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Library of Congress

city, town Washington state D.C.

## 7. Description

### Condition

☐ excellent  
☒ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved date        N/A

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

#### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Dickenson County Courthouse stands against a hillside facing the intersection of Clintwood's two major streets. The dignified, two-story Colonial Revival building is the chief architectural and institutional landmark in the county. The facade consists of a projecting porticoed pavilion flanked by wings to the east and west with a clock tower rising above. Designed by the architect H. M. Miller in 1915, the building was added to the front of the 1894 brick courthouse. A modern addition, constructed in 1972, replaced the 1894 building.

#### ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

Dickenson County Courthouse, dominated by a two-story portico with paired Ionic columns on a high podium, rises two stories above a raised, stepped basement of scored concrete. The projecting central block and wings are laid in stretcher-bond brick covered by a slate-shingled hipped roof crowned by a domed clock tower with a weathervane. The plain frieze and projecting modillion cornice outline the perimeter of the roof and define the portico's pediment. This portion of the building was designed by H. M. Miller in 1915 and was added to the front (north) of the 1894 brick courthouse.

In the facade fenestration, the lower openings are paired with flat brick arches accented by stone keystones and voussoirs, while the upper windows are Palladian in form with rounded brick arches also having stone keystones and imposts. All of the windows contain multi-paned sash. The double entrance doors with latticework transom framed by a cornice are sheltered by the portico. The entrance is reached by stairs descending to the east and west.

Corbeled brick at the corners of the building in imitation of quoins stresses the solid appearance of the building's mass. This treatment of the central block is repeated on the wings. The rear addition (south) completed in 1972, a simplified version of the front section, replaced the 1894 building which was removed at that date.

The interior of the building has been altered during the various remodelings and enlargements; however, some original features have been retained. The county courtroom located on the second floor of the building is one of the best examples of a rural turn-of-the-century courtroom in existence in Virginia. Its oak floor with austere folding wood chairs slopes towards the judge's bench. The massive, oak-paneled bench framed by portraits of the county's founding fathers on the wall behind is separated from the remainder of the room by a lattice railing. Segmental arched windows and wainscoting formed by narrow vertical panels with a pedestal chair rail and baseboard embellish the room. Fluorescent lights now hang from the pressed-tin ceiling with anthemion-bordered frieze, although original fixture outlets are visible. The circuit courtroom is housed in the 1972 addition.

The treasurer's office located on the first floor contains its original quarter-sawn oak counter with marble baseboard. Raised rectangular panels are separated by fluted Doric pilasters, alternating panels with consoles supporting projecting rounded marble slabs. The treasurer's wooden cage was removed during a previous remodeling.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400-1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500-1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600-1699	<u>X</u> architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/
___ 1700-1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	humanitarian
___ 1800-1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ theater
<u>X</u> 1900-	___ communications	___ industry	<u>X</u> politics/government	___ transportation
		___ invention		___ other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1915, 1972 **Builder/Architect** H. M. Miller, add. by Beeson & Beeson

### Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

#### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Colonial Revival Dickenson County Courthouse is a prominent landmark in the heart of the Commonwealth's coal-mining region. The straightforward, massive building is symbolic of the county's prosperity during the 1910s resulting from expanded railroad construction and increased timber production and coal mining in the area. Completed in 1915 under the designs of architect H. M. Miller, the building is the third courthouse to serve the county since its creation from parts of Russell, Wise, and Buchanan counties in 1880.

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Dickenson County, the one hundredth county to be established in the state, lies on the southeast slope of the Cumberland Mountains in an area once covered with an unbroken forest of hardwood trees, called "Sandy Basin." According to local tradition, the earliest known settler, "Fighting Dick" Colley, was lured to the area by the abundant wildlife. By the 1830s others from the Clinch River area and North Carolina had settled in the region of Sand Lick and Holly Creek and had organized a Baptist church and subscription schools.

The mountain barriers between the basin and each of the three county seats long discouraged most of the inhabitants of the area from participating in government. It was not until a citizen of Russell County in October 1876 instituted a suit in Buchanan to eject about forty settlers from the lands they owned that the basin inhabitants actively sought legislation to form a new county.<sup>1</sup> In 1879 a meeting was held at the mouth of Open Fork (now called Nora), and a petition for the new county was formulated and placed in the hands of William J. Dickenson, a delegate from Russell County. Dickenson's bill which was passed by the General Assembly on March 3, 1880, provided that "a new county shall be known by the name of Dickenson; the courthouse for said county to be located on McClure creek at or near the mouth of Cany Creek, and to be called 'Ervinton'." <sup>2</sup> The choice of location outraged citizens of the western section of the county. The General Assembly finally settled the dispute by requiring that the new county's seat be located at Holly Creek "at some point between the dwelling house of James P. Kilgore and...William Hylton, to be called Clintwood." <sup>3</sup> The name was chosen to honor the senator from Scott County, Major Henry Clint Wood, who had lent his influential support to this bill in the Virginia Senate.

The act also appointed the clerks from the three neighboring counties to choose the exact site for the new county's courthouse, jail, and public buildings. During the interim the county court was to be held in various dwellings. The first session met "in the log dwelling house of James Fleming at the mouth of Caney Creek on July 22, 1880." <sup>4</sup> However, within a year after the establishment of the county seat at Clintwood, a brick courthouse and wooden jail were constructed. In 1894 another brick courthouse replaced this original structure.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #2

Acts and Joint Resolutions passed by The Assembly of the State of Virginia, 1879; 1881-82.  
Industrial Survey Dickenson County, Virginia. Blacksburg, Va.: Engineering Extension  
Division, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, 1930.  
Sutherland, E. J. Meet Virginia's Baby. A Brief Pictorial History of Dickenson County,  
Virginia. Clintwood, Va.: Diamond Jubilee Commission, 1955.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1/2 acre

Quadrangle name Clintwood, Va.-Ky.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 17 370610 4112300  
Zone Easting Northing

B                    
Zone Easting Northing

C                  

D                  

E                  

F                  

G                  

H                  

**Verbal boundary description and justification** Occupying a rectangular lot on the N side of VA 607 (Main St.), opposite the intersection with TL001 (McClure St.), measuring approx. 125' x 200', with the 125' fronting on Va. 607. Boundary justification: The nominated acreage of the Dickenson County Courthouse is the half-acre lot on which the building stands.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
-------	-----	------	--------	-----	------

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
-------	-----	------	--------	-----	------

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

organization Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission date July 1982

street & number 221 Governor Street telephone (804) 786-3144

city or town Richmond state Virginia 23219

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

   national   X   state    local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature H. Bryan Mitchell  
H. Bryan Mitchell, Executive Director  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

date JUL 20 1982

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

DICKENSON COUNTY COURTHOUSE, DICKENSON COUNTY, VA.

Continuation sheet #1

Item number 7 , 8

Page 1, 1

For NPS use only

received

date entered

7. DESCRIPTION -- Architectural Analysis

The hallways of the 1915 section are finished with a high pedestal chair rail and door and window openings encased in lattice transoms and simple cornices.

The courthouse covers most of the steep lot from which it rises. A concrete retaining wall lines the street in front of the building. The sloping lawn is grass covered with a scattering of shade trees. The two-story brick jail stands immediately west of the courthouse.

MPM

8. SIGNIFICANCE -- Historical Background

Farming was the principal livelihood of the county region throughout the 19th century, although inhabitants became increasingly aware of the extensive resources of coal, other minerals, and timber within the area. As speculators and prospectors crowded into the county, many landowners learned to demand higher prices for their mineral and timber rights. Significant industrial development did not occur until the Carolina, Clinchfield, and Ohio Railway began to construct roadbeds and opened the way for traffic in 1915. The coming of the railroad immediately opened up the hidden resources of this rich mountain region to development by coal and lumber companies.<sup>5</sup>

With the connection of the county to outside markets, towns within began to acquire an air of prosperity. Roads were improved and new public buildings were constructed. During this surge of prosperity in the 1910s, the 1894 courthouse was substantially enlarged. The new section designed in the popular Colonial Revival style by H. M. Miller was built onto the north elevation of the earlier brick structure. The solid and refined Colonial Revival design not only expressed the county's new found wealth; it also exuded an air of confidence and strength that came from identifying with a long and proud history. An addition was made to the building in 1950. In 1972 the 1894 courthouse section of the present structure was razed and a new addition constructed in its place under the direction of Beeson and Beeson of Abingdon.

MPM/VDS

<sup>1</sup> E. J. Sutherland, Meet Virginia's Baby. A Brief Pictorial History of Dickenson County, Virginia (Clintwood: Diamond Jubilee Commission, 1955), p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Acts and Joint Resolutions passed by the Assembly of the State of Virginia (1879, 1881-82), p. 126.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>4</sup> Sutherland, p. 24.

<sup>5</sup> Industrial Survey Dickenson County, Virginia (Blacksburg: Virginia Polytechnic Institute, 1930), p. 15.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

DICKENSON COUNTY COURTHOUSE, DICKENSON COUNTY, VA

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

Continuation sheet #2

Item number 9 , 6

Page 1 , 1

9. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Sutherland, Hetty S., Clintwood, Virginia. Telephone Interview. May 1982.

Wise, Va. Clinch Valley College Reference Library. "Clintwood is Growing,"  
Dickenson County Moon, June 11, 1915.

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

(2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey  
1982 State  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission  
221 Governor Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

